

Tips for Being a Nurturing Parent

One of the most important things you can do to prevent child abuse is to build a positive relationship with your own children.

Help your children feel loved and secure.

We can all take steps to improve our relationship with our children:

- ✦ Make sure your children know you love them, even when they do something wrong.
- ✦ Encourage your children. Praise their achievements and talents.
- ✦ Spend time with your children. Do things together that you all enjoy.

Seek help if you need it.

Problems such as unemployment or a child with special needs can add to family tension. And parenting is a challenging job on its own. No one expects you to know how to do it all. If you think stress may be affecting the way you treat your child, or if you just want the extra support that all parents need at some point, try the following:

- ✦ **Talk to someone.** Tell a friend, healthcare provider, or a leader in your faith community about your concerns. Or join a self-help group for parents. (See Circle of Parents and Parents Anonymous® Inc. in the Resource Directory, page 59, to locate a group near you.)
- ✦ **Get counseling.** Individual or family counseling can help you learn healthy ways to communicate with each other.
- ✦ **Take a parenting class.** Nobody was born knowing how to be a good parent. Parenting classes can give you the skills you need to raise a happy, healthy child.
- ✦ **Accept help.** You don't have to do it all. Accept offers of help from friends, family, or neighbors. And don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it.

Address marital tension.

Children do best when they are raised by parents in a stable and healthy marriage. Research has found successful couples do not have fewer differences or less to fight about, but they are able to effectively handle their differences or disagreements. If you are experiencing tension in your marriage, seek out the supports you need to help you resolve it.

